



raccoon

Procyon lotor

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Mammalia
Order: Carnivora
Family: Procyonidae

Features

The raccoon is 26 to 38 inches long, including an eight to 12-inch tail. It weighs 10 to 20 pounds. The long, gray-black hair on the back looks grizzled. There is a black line down the middle of its back. It has a broad head with black hair on the face in the shape of a mask. There are five to seven alternating light and dark bands on its long, fluffy tail.

Natural History

The raccoon lives in a variety of habitats as long as water, den sites, and food are available. It commonly lives in urban areas. It eats berries, carrion, corn, cottontails, crayfish, fish, garbage, fruits, insects, mice, nuts, turtles, and other items. The front feet are used for finding, gathering, and holding food items. A raccoon can climb extremely well and is a good swimmer. It makes growling, trilling, and wailing sounds. Tree cavities are most often used for den sites but barns, attics, and brush piles are also used. Breeding occurs between December and May. Young are born March

through June after a gestation period of two months. Litter size averages two to four.

Habitats

bottomland forests; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.